

INNOCENCY AND TRUTH JUSTIFIED.

*Let the quintessence of sweetnesse which is in the Lord Jesus
Christ, be alwayes your delight.*

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Ompassionate and loving friend, I heartily salute you
in the Lord, desiring of him for you, that the sweet-
test of his consolation in the apprehension of his e-
ternall love to your soule in the Lord Jesus Christ,
may both now and ever be with you, and apprehen-
ded by you, and also that the spirit of truth may
be your Director, Guider and Leader in the true,
and upright wayes of God, that so you may walke unblameably
in all his paths, as it doth become one of the redeemed ones of the
Lord, following the Lambe whithersoever he goeth, not loving your
life to the death, if he please to call for it.
The Lord being an almighty God, is able to bring to passe his owne
decrees and counsels by his owne way and meanes, and in
his due time, and he in his wisdom hath so ordered it, that I his
weake and young servant, should be counted worthy by him to
have the honour and dignitie bestowed on me for to suffer for his cause
and glory, and to beare witnesse to the purity of his truth, and to oppose
his and capitall enemies, namely, the man of sin, and his chiefe
adversaries and confederates, the Bishops, and their Priests, and Deacons,
who have for many hundred yeares together, buried the truth and the
wayes of God in Oblivion, and troden underfoot, the holy Citie
of the Church of God, which *Iohn* in his Revelation long since large-
ly prophesied of, as you may fully read in that sacred Booke. Now as

my afflictions (which have been of many sorts and kinds) hath been exceeding great, so my God hath exceedingly above measure magnified his owne holy name, in manifesting the greatnesse of his almighty power in me, and by me, that of my selfe am but a poore weake young worme, yet one unto whom he hath revealed in a great measure (my tender yeares being considered) that which he hath hid from the great, mighty and wise men of the world, and in the first place, with that overflowing fullnesse of sweetnesse, which is in himselfe, hath drawne my soule unto him, and made me one with himselfe, and also, hath made knowne unto me, that there is that excellencie in the injoying of himselfe alone, that will ballance downe all the miseries, calamities, and distresses, which it is possible for the malice of man to heape upon me, the riches of which excellencie, is so transcendent, that it is worth the forgoing of all earthly delights and pleasures, yea, Father, Brethren, and kindred, and a mans owne life, and outward welfare.

And in the second place, he hath been a fountaine of wisdom to my soule, and hath given understanding to my heart, (that am but dull of my selfe) to manage his cause, for which I suffer wisely and discreetly, that mine enemies have been even amazed and confounded in themselves seeing the mighty power and wisdom of God in me, who according to his owne promise, hath shewed himselfe to be a God of truth and faithfulness, in giving me such wisdom and understanding before them, that they have not been able to gainsay me or withstand me, as in point of my examinations before them, long since in writing you may read, also he hath given me such boldnesse and courage, that he hath made me to manifest the truth of the saying of the wise man, the righteous are as bold as a Lyon, for the large possession of that fullnesse, that is in my God, hath made my soule say unto it selfe, (apprehending the powerfull assistance of my almighty God) I will not feare though ten thousand compassse me round about on every side, for the Lord is with me, through whose strength and might, I shall triumph upon, and overcome all mine Enemies, for God is my salvation, in him will I trust, and not be afraid for the Lord *Iehovah* is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation, *Esa. 12. 2.* this with the apprehension of that unspeakable sweetnesse and joy, which no soule is able fully to apprehend, nor no tongue to the uttermost to utter or expresse, nor no heart able to believe, or feel but only those that have tasted of the sweetnesse of it, this (I say) made me upon the day of my publique suffering, in the multitude of my triple stripes, with knotted cords (amounting to above two hundred) to

dergoe them with joy and rejoyceing, and with a cheerfull countenance, as laughing and lightly esteeming, the barbarous cruell malice of my enemies, declaring in my very outward behaviour, that the fulnesse and quintessence of sweetnesse of the Lord of glory, was felt and apprehended in my soule, which did so ravish my spirit, that at the inflicting of all my punishment and stripes on me, I felt little or no paine, also this did so replenish my heart with mirth and gladnesse, that I was on that day as merrie and cheerfull, as if I had been going then to have been made possessor of all the treasures, pleasure, contents and delights, that this present world can afford, and all the time of my outward miserie and punishment, I did not so much as shew one sad or heavie countenance, nor declare the least signe of a discontented heart, but by the strength of my God, which is the Lord of Hosts, I did glory in them, and triumph over them all, and made his, and my enemies, the Prelates and Priests, (many of which did behold me) to gnaw their tongues for paine, and to gnash their teeth for verie madnesse, and so filled them with heart burning fury, that they could not endure to behold the power of God, which shined in me, nor to heare the truth of God, which he caused to proceed from me, which made them by the assistance of others, to cause my mouth inhumainely to be gagged, above an houre and a halfe, this with all the rest hath beene the Lords owne doing, who was then, and still is, the worker of all my workes, in me, and for me. *Esa. 26. 12.* Also in my ironed and fettered condition, lying on both my hands and legs, in which I lay laid night and day, for a long time together, being forced, to lye in bootes, and when I have been tyred out with them, in the scorching heat of summer, to lye with them upon my bare legs, and sometimes for now in winter, to lye in three paire of stockings, and in this condition whiles strenght of body lasted, my soule was exceeding filled, with joy and rejoyceing, and my time was spent with singing praises to my God, and lauding and magnifying of his holy name, and in studying, how to live upon him, and to live in all conditions upon that heavenly, sweet spirituall food, that he fills the soules, and hearts of his darlings. I was wearie ones; with labouring for contentednesse in all estates and conditions; but of all my afflictions that have layn upon me, a young Souldier in Christ, the greatest hath been since the beginning of my sicknesse, the regard of my extremitie of bodily paine, and weakenesse, which hath brought me even to deaths doore, despairing in my selfe, of my life, making my soule fit for that place, where I shall ever be with my God, but this was the least of my affliction in this

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for my soule in all my extremitie was in the present possession of the assured hopes of living for ever in a better life, even the life of glory, with the God of glory, in the Kingdome of glory, that never shall have end, the present possession of the joy of which, and the assured future hope of the full fruition of them, did so above measure take up my soule, that it made me to long and earnestly to desire to be dissolved, that so I might face to face be with my sweet Lord and master Christ, which as I have faith, is best of all, but my God as yet see not this fit for me, and therefore hath given me some hopes of the lengthning of my dayes, that I may be a further instrument of his praise and glory, as I hope I shall be living unto my selfe, but unto him, that hath redeemed, and done for me many great things for me, but what further he hath for me to doe, and whether, I as yet know not, being now and alwayes in a prepared readiness through his strength and assistance, to spend and be spent for his glory and glory, the severall qualities of my affliction in this my condition would be too many now to reckon up, only the quantitie of them hath bene very great and soule peircing, and those multitudes of sorrowfull comfortable consolations that my God in them hath given me, would be too tedious now to set downe, only as his left hand hath been over me, when he hath cast me downe, his right hand hath been powerfully and faithfully to order me to uphold me and lift me up, yet the greatest of all the afflictions proceeded, not so much from the blood thirsty cruelty of my implacable enemies, (which never hath, nor I hope never shall dismay me) but from my false supposed bosom friends, who hath wounded my soule, and pierced through my spirit againe and againe, by their audacious and false reports against my person, causlessly and innocently by malicious lying, by taking away my good name, and so by labelling to disgrace, eclipse and overthrow my witnesse bearing the pure truth of God, and also laying his honour and glory (which I have got by it) in the dust, one party especially having made me more famous as ever poore *Iob* was when he sate on the Dung-hill with his botches, not so much to the base rabble of the world, (whose judgement censuring of me, I no more regard then I doe the dirt in the chamber) as also to some of my friends which before have loved me, and also to multitudes of others, that have never that I know seene my face, which professe outwardly (but I am afraid seemingly) the fear of the Lord, whose eares have bene open to heare, and hearts ready to speak & tongues swift to report, that parties malicious wicked lyes, which they heard my defence in the least, in regard their hearts for God.

possessed with prejudice and hatred against my person, the party running from the one end of the Citie to the other, like one in whom a Legion of Devils is, in swearing and forswearing, protesting with many a bitter curse and oath the things are true, but my Apologie and just and innocent defence to some of my loving Friends I have lately made, which you may read I have sufficiently cleared my unspotted innocency in that kind, and vindicated my person from all lying calumniations, and this I did not so much for my selfe only; (seeing I have the peace of a good conscience within me, which to me is more then ten thousand witnesses, and it is my God that justifieth me, and I care not who be that condemns me) but for the glory of God, and the truths sake especially, have I done it, which otherwise might have suffered and been eclipsed by the haters and despisers of it, I have bene the latter in setting downe this one thing, because of all the rest of my afflictions, it hath laid me the lowest, and emptied mee most of my selfe, and made me to see more clearly then before, that the wayes to heaven and happinesse are strewed with thornes and brambles, which is as spirituall phisicke to purge the soules of Gods owne chosen ones from the drossie putrifactions and corruptions which is in their spirits, which made that righteous *Job* to say, when thou hast tryed me, I shall come out of the fire like refined gold, Chap. 23. 10. and this is Gods refining Pot and chusing place to manifest the greatnesse of his riches and kindnesse to his people, for saith he, I have refined thee, but not with silver, for I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction, *Esa.* 48. 10. and in this affliction God hath made me more willing then before, to goe through bad reports as well as good, through all sorts of disgraces, contempts, revilings, reproaches and lyes, and that no confidence is to be put in a brother, seeing they are subject to deceive and walke with flanders, *Jer.* 9. 4. 5. this being the lot, not only of my fellow brethren, that are gone before me, but also of my Lotd and Master, (as I have largely declared and particulared in my foresaid late Apologie) who was despised of his owne brethren according to the *Isa.* yet though this was most bitter unto me at the first, making my soule exceedingly to bleed before my God; being almost brought into *Jobs* and *Ieremiahs* condition in regard of the greatnesse of my sorrows, ready to curse the day of my birth, that one party alone (as I have told my Keeper) made me to be a man almost more fit for Bedlam then for his custody and keeping, driving me into that condition, that for the present time I did not know well what I did, yet my powerfull and gracious God, mightily and exceedingly upheld and supported me, and enabled mee

me to keepe my hold, and not let my confidence goe, yet I say, though this was bitter at the first, yet now it hath produced unto my soule exceeding peaceable fruit of Righteousnesse, and hath made me more fully by many degrees then before, to see the vanitie of riches, the insufficiency of earthly treasures, the emptinesse of kindred, friends, acquaintance, and supposed Christian brethren, and that all earthly and terrestiall things, yea the choicest of them, are but flie-blown emper moth-eaten contents, which vanisheth away, and are gone in a moment even in the twinkling of an eye, in which no solid nor soule satisfi content, or satisfaction is to be found, had possessed, or enjoyed, and cursed is he that puts any confidence in the arme of flesh, or in the favour of men, withall, it hath gained me the greatest experience, of the love, mercie, and kindnesse, then all the rest of my afflictions hath done in which the Lord hath caused all his goodnesse, and loving kindnesse to passe by my soule, making me to take a deep, and serious view of the abstract of sweetnesse that is in himselfe, so that I can truly say as the Spouse in the Canticles, that my King hath brought me into his bed-chamber, and made his mouth to be most sweet, yea altogether lovely unto my soule having carried me into his Wine Cellar, and made me drinke deepe of the great varietie of soule consolations, that are in himselfe, so that the glorious and transcendant description, of the Lord Christ, which the Church gives of him, (doth not more set of his lustre and beauty, then I have seene it) in Canticles 5. 10, 11. 12. she saith he, beloved is white and ruddie, the chiefeft among ten thousand, his head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are bushie, and blacke as a Raven, his eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set, his cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers, his lipps like Lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrhe, his hands are as gold rings, set with the berill, his bellie is as bright Ivory, overlaid with Saphires, his legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, his countenance is as Zebanon, excellent as the Cedars; his mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of *Ierusalem*. This glorious description of him, I say, doth not more set forth his lustre and beauty, and unpareld excellency, and glory, then my soule in this sore afflicted condition hath seene, and apprehended it, in which great combat, he hath given me the full assurance that I am set as a seale upon his heart, being as deare unto him as the apple of his eye, and as precious unto him, as one of his choicest Jewels, and delightfome ones, in which he hath made my soule to finde

him selfe alone, the marrow of fatnesse, the quintessence of sweetnesse, the abstract of consolation, the abridgement of comfort, the Epitomie of all delight, the summe of content, the greatnesse of joy, the light of rejoycing, the treasure of unvaluable price; the abundance of satisfaction, the fulnesse of peace, the lovelinesse of beauty, and my exceeding great reward.

And that Jesus Christ alone, is all in all, even the fountaine that never groweth dry, but alwayes springs; the streames of which hath made my way in this the greatest of my afflictions, distresses, and sorrowes, to overflow with comfort, rejoycing, and consolation, and hath made me know, that he is the treasure of unestimable price, which is so full of unexhaustable, and unexhaustable riches, that the soule of a beleever may spend largely upon, all his dayes, like a King, and a Prince, and never be able to draw it dry, but find, and see more worth in it at last, then he did at the first, and also that he is the soule clothing, and covering garment, the which the more a beleever weares, the warmer it will keepe him, and the more it will refresh him, and that he is a shelter and refuge to all his distressed ones, so strong, that is able in the greatest of their distresses & calamities, to keep of all storms & tempests that may arise, though the winds blow, and the seas roare, and heaven and earth go together, and men and Devills conspire against them, yet under his almighty fatherly protection, in the possessing of the sweet peace of a good conscience, committing their selves and their soules to him in well doing, they are safe and sure from all danger, harme and wrong, and in this condition, my soule hath even beene ravished and swallowed up with beholding the naked delight that is in Christ alone, which hath exceedingly cheered my heart in the midst of all my wrongs and disgraces, and with that transcendent beautie & excellencie that shines in his person, which doth farre and by many degrees goe beyond all those benefits and privileges that my soule enjoyes, and shall hereafter possesse, by vertue of my union and communion with him. Deare and loving friend, your letter I have received, and in much weaknesse, after much difficulty, read it, my eyes at that time being so weake, that the reading of your letter, was more then I did, for many dayes before, the Lord having so weakened in my sore sickness many times, to take from me, the strength of my eye sight, by which I have beene deprived, for many weekes together, so much, so much as to read a Chapter, in the booke of God, that being that wherein I spend my time, and study, when God gives me strength and a bilitie to read over any part of those sweet and comfortable

ble

The portions and promises that are therein recorded, and indeed in
 are the oracles of God contained, the understanding of which booke
 alone, is sufficiently able to make a man wise unto salvation, and to build
 him up in every good work, all humane writings being no better in com-
 parison to it then channel durt: And when I read your letter, I cannot but
 declare unto you the refreshing that my soule found in it; it being
 great cause of the increase of that present inward joy that I have, and
 hath beene one of the acceptable and welcomest tokens to me, that
 hath come at me in this my close restraint from the hands of any man
 or woman, in regard, coratives and tart expressions from kindred, friends
 and acquaintance have beene the constant messengers that have sounded
 a loud alarme in my eares, scarce any one man or woman, labouring
 truly to drop or distill the oyle of consolation into my soule, which you
 (like a true Samaritane) have done unto me, your letter being become
 great strengthning and comfort to my spirit, which hath made me in my
 supplications earnestly to poure out my soule unto my God, imploring
 his speciall assistance, and that he would be pleased to bestow some fresh
 strength upon me, that I might be able a little, to expresse my hearty thank-
 fulnesse unto you, and also communicate unto you some of those choicest
 consolations that my soule finds in my God, in this my weake and low
 condition, which is accompanied with extremitie of bodily paine, prin-
 cipally in my head; by reason of my long exceeding closenes, and as he
 hath stiled himselfe, so I have found him to be againe at this time, a God
 hearing prayer, in granting my earnest desire and request, and beyond
 and above my expectation, he hath bestowed renewed strength upon mee
 that I might be able now to write unto you, though at the present time
 when it came unto me, if I might have had my present liberty for doing
 this that now by his strength and assistance I have done, I had not beene
 able to doe it; In your letter you have not only given cause of re-
 joycing to my soule, but also put a fresh song of praise in my mouth
 unto my God that honours and glorifies himselfe by the sufferance of me
 poore and young servant: you say when you were first with me in
 my close imprisonment, which was before I was laid in Iron fetters, your
 soule was mightily beyond measure refreshed to see my boldnesse, com-
 tablenesse, and cheerfulness in the Lord, that it became as marrow
 to your bones, your spirit being filled so full of joy, that you were not able
 to containe it, to behold the great goodnesse of God in giving
 me such meekenesse, patience, and smiling merrinesse, in my tedious
 yeares, to undergoe so rejoycingly, such a great cruell affliction,

to you say you did behold in me, as in a glasse most cleer, the mightie
 power of God in giving me such courage, wisdom and undauntednesse,
 carry my selfe as you did behold me in this my suffering condition,
 must truly confesse, it is the Lords owne doing (who hath perfected
 strength in my weaknesse) but it is marvelous in my eyes to behold
 take notice of all those workes of wonder that he hath manifested
 declared in me and for me, since my publique suffering began, and to
 only and above I desire to give the praise of all, you desire me to
 unto you, and you tell me, that I cannot spend my time better
 to fill your eares with the relation of the Lords workes of wonder
 which he hath done for me, some of which you reckon up, as that the
 should so draw of the affections of me a young man, in
 unto himselfe, intirely to disrobe my selfe free, and wil-
 ly of all earthly delights, pleasures and contents, which the
 long since hath made me to doe, I blesse his name for it. Ah
 dear and loving friend and fellow heire. (I hope) of the same
 dome with me, is your soule so affected with my sore afflicted
 condition, that you are so desirous to have some of those un-
 variable goodnesse, and sweetnesse communicated unto you, that my
 hath not only tasted of, but drunk deep of in the bitterest of all my
 growes strength of body and a fitting opportunitie would serve me
 could fill your eares with the true relation of reall workes of wonder in-
 and if I should largely and fully launch out into those unfadoma-
 depths of loving kindnes, mercie and truth that my soule hath found
 God alone, I could set you a reading, not only whole dayes together,
 even some weekes in the perusing of that matter that my soule is fil-
 full of, and able to expresse, if strength of eyes would suffer me to doe
 being so full, that for all my weaknes, I am scarce able to containe my
 in silence, but I must be forced to abbreviate my selfe, and leave you
 the admiring of that goodnesse, sweetnes, and almightie power, the ex-
 tions of which in part, you may not only read in this my epistle to your
 but also in my epistle to others of my friends; and my answers to my
 posers, but especially in a large epistle to a Citizens wife, and a profes-
 in the Church of England, which long since, before the depths of my
 growes, and the times of my so publique disgracefull and contempti-
 condition, was my loving friend, though now for my judgment sake
 which is the truth) shee with divers others, become as strangers and
 strangers to me, which I compiled without either pen or inke in the
 sinning of my cruell fettered and shackled condition.
 At the time when you were with me, it was but the beginning of my

feast of fat things, and of late when my afflictions hath more abound-
 ed, it hath bin the time of my soule banquetting and junketting condi-
 tion, in which the Lord hath brought forth all his sweete and pleasa-
 meats, and made my soule to eate of them, even to the fulnes of satisfac-
 tion, which hath made the streames of my spirituall comforts so abun-
 dantly to come flowing into my soule, that I have not had room enough
 to receive and entertaine them, and the conduit pipes of my consolation
 have not only dropped, but even runn with the sweetnes of hony, and
 sugary, so that I have drunk above measure of that unpareld spiced cup
 that is in my God, so that now if you were with me, and had time and
 opportunity to discourse with me, you should see, that I could make you
 a large nose-gay, of the quintessence of sweetnes of those soule delight-
 some flowers, that growes in Gods garden, and I could open unto you
 a cabinet of transcendant, choice and precious jewels, the lustre of which
 should even ravish your soule, and more fully fill your spirit, with over-
 flowing comfort then before, when you first see me, for the latter kin-
 nes of God unto me, hath far, and by many degrees exceeded the for-
 mer, he having kept the best and sweetest wine of soule comforting, and
 hearty reioycing consolations, even untill now, so that now if I had your
 face to face, I could tell you of miracles and wonders indeed, as great
Israels deliverance out of *Egypt*, their preservation in the red-Sea, and
 in the barren and desert wilderness, and as the three Children being in
 the hot scorching fierie furnace, not burned, and as *Daniels* being in the
 Lyons den, not devoured, and as *Pauls* being upon earth, and yet in spi-
 rit rapt up into the third Heavens, having his heart filled with that tran-
 scendant glory and excellency, that the tongue of man is not able
 thoroughly to expresse, or the heart of man able fully to conceive, for
 that can be said of these is but this, that in them was manifested the mi-
 ty and miraculous power of the Lord *Iehovah*, the God of heaven and
 earth, and the greatnes of his love and kindnes to his people, and both
 these he hath done in my soule, and for my soule, since the beginning
 my afflictions and tribulations for the truths sake, as I could largely
 natomize, and particularly unto you, if bodylie strength would serve
 and I can out of grounded experience say, that there is no condition
 under heaven, like the enioying of God in a prison, within thick
 walls, and strong Iron gates, no consolations so great, as those that be
 felt in lying in Irons for his sake, no comforts so sweet, as those that be
 floweth on his in the greatest of all their worldly disgraces, for suffer
 for his truth, no riches so precious as is, got in the looking of kind

all outward delights for his glory, no delights so pleasant, as is to be found in naked Christ, in the midst of all worldly miseries and sorrows for conscience sake, no reioycing here below more transcendant, then is to be had in the innocent loosing of a good name, and being reproached, reviled, and odiously belyed, (even by those that have been supposed some friends) innocently and causlessly, but only for his cause and truths sake, no mercies more welcom, and highlier Prized, then those that the soule of a beleever receives, in depending upon God in the height of straits and wants, yet beleiving the truth and faithfulness of his promise, and hoping above hope, and beyond hope, for the supplying of necessities, and for the enjoying and possiding of that which a sufferer in his cause truly wants and stands in need of. Oh the unspeakable riches, tulnes of pleasures, and satisfaction of content that my soule is in! and I have got in this my suffering state, in which I see an excellency in my Christ alone, which weighs downe all my miseries, and transcends in worth all these mercies that I do enjoy by him, he being the purchaser, donor, and giver of them all, and therefore must needs be of more worth himself, then all his glorious benefits which he hath bestowed on me, and I am sure hereafter to enjoy: and indeed, did but my inveterate and cruell enemies truly know and understand how deliciously my soule fares every day, and how richly, and plentifully my table is furnished every moment with the pleasant bread of God, and soule nourishing food that come downe from heaven, and how laughingly I deride their satanicall cruelty, and lightly esteeme their wrath and indignation, they would even tear their flesh for very madnesse, at my exceeding spirituall prosperity, and thrust me out with as much hatred as ever they brought me in, for very envie, at the greatnes of my soules happines, to think with themselves, that they should send me to prison, a place of misery and woe (as they supposed) that it should become unto me, contrary to their expectation, a place of joy and exceeding reioycing, yea a heaven upon earth, and that they should lay me in fetters and shackles of iron, in a cruell barbarous manner to torment me, and that I should make much of them, and weare them with so much delight and pleasure, counting them as precious as chaines of gold, and pearles, and to esteeme the lying in them, a greater honour and dignity, then if they had bestowed an earthly diadem and crowne upon me, and indeed if they had set all their wits and cunning earthly policy at worke, to have dignified and honoured me above measure, they could not have gone nor have chosen a more direct way to glorifie me, then in this. All this they have done innocently, for

my conscience sake, and for bearing witness to the purity of the truth of Christ, I cannot but render my humblest thanks unto you, both for the care you have of my soule and body, and expressions of your love towards them, but especially for your sweet letter, of which I more esteeme then if you had sent me much choice silver, and a great deale of fine gold. You say you have received already a recompence of reward, for your labour and love manifested to the Lords afflicted ones; my desire is that it may be increased againe and againe, and redound exceedingly to your best accompt, in the great day of your great accompt, as I hope it will: for if the Lord hath a reward (as he himselfe saith he hath) for those that bestow but a cup of cold water upon any of his in the name of a Disciple, what then shall be your reward, that doth much more in temporall things, but farr exceed in spirituall, the expressions of which you have manifested to my selfe, which I have largely seen in that epistle you sent to me, wherein you have declared the intirenes of your love, and the earnings of spirit which you have towards me, in your earnest and fervent prayers for me (a weake and young sufferer) to that God that heares and graciously granteth the supplications of his servants, cease not I pray you) to knock and cry still for me, for I have fared the better, and exceedingly felt the strength of the prayers of you and others of the Lords people, which whole dayes together, you say you poured out for me, having your cheeks bedewed with the teares of Joy in remembrance of me. O my entirely beloved Christian friend and sister, for I perceive the Image of Jesus Christ himself is pourtrayed upon your soule, therefore I cannot but greet you with this loving compellation of sister, though wee be not joyned in the outward profession of the Gospel of Christ, for any thing I know of, in the true visible waies of Christ, yet my heart is mightily enlarged towards you, and I desire as much as your selfe, (wishing with all my soule, if my God did see it good) that I might have the happines to have one houres discourse with you face to face, whose company and presence would be more acceptable and welp-lesing to me, then shee that should come in a Velvet gowne, and bestow upon me a thousand pounds, if her soule were not imbellished with those precious Jewels and pearles, that yours (in my eyes, and judgment) shines, and glisters with, and as for my outward condition which you desire to know how it is with me, in few words I desire to speake unto you of it, having sufficient for this day, I dare not take thought for to morrow, but cast all my care upon him who careth for me, and who (according to his promise) hath (beyond my expecta-

on) provided dayly bread for me, so that I have never yet wanted, though I have lost that little estate which I had of mine owne, and though the most of my old acquaintance and friends, have long since left me, yet he hath raised up new ones, who with the bowels of compassion hath refreshed me in my great miserie, the face of some of which, I never to this houre did behold or see, and my expressions in this kind, (though I have often been asked about this thing yet they) have alwaies been very sparing, and few, and I intend they shall be so, in regard I am afraid to give the least occasion to any, to misinterpret the satisfied contentednes of my heart, in the lowest condition whatsoever, and when my portion hath been the meanest and least, yet then it hath been to me a satisfying fulnesse, for Godlines with contentednes (which I have) is great gaine unto my soule, which makes me with a weaned affection, to looke upon all the creaturs, yea the choicest of them, and not distrustfully to care for the things of this life, for I confidently beleieve the Lord will worke mighty wonders, and change stones into bread, and cause water to flow out of the flinty rocks, as he did in the daies of old, before that I his suffering servant should want, and I have learned in all estates, and conditions, there with to be content, both to abound and suffer want, and if need should so require, to go thorow hunger and thirst, cold and nakednesse, for I know my God will fitt my heart and spirit for any condition that he shall call me to, yea also and make me rejoyce in it.

You declare unto me, that your beholding in me an almighty power for my strong support (which you tooke notice of) quickned up your mind, and made you so to plod upon faith and beleiving, and to see an excellencie in it, that none is to be compared to it of all the expressions in your letter, which are verie sweet, yet this excelleth the rest, in being most sweet, and most happie are you, that the Lord hath bestowed upon you, this precious Jewell of faith, which I judge you are a reall possessor of, and hath given you such a strong desire, not only after the bare enjoying of it, but also after the large possessing of it, which very few attain unto, which makes them so little to glorifie God as they do, and to live so uncomfortably, and full of base carnall fear in this their spirituall warfare, as they give to understand in the carriages of their lives, by wallowing so grovelingly upon the earth, as though they sought for a happiness out of the base and empty huskes thereof, thereby manifesting and declaring, that they do not see nor behold a satisfactory sufficient fulnesse to be had and enjoyed in the alone possessing of the Creator, but they take it out, in letting their off

Contents and empty satisfactions of the creature, though the strength of faith (the reall possession of which, wee give declaration of unto others when we walk uprightly and unblameably in all his waies, without any self respects,) is more transcendant then thousands of degrees then the possessing of the aboundance of all these outward things, and though you yourself hath a large portion in them, being one as you say that may enjoy all outward things that heart can desire, yet this rare jewell exceeds all, yea the love of your nearest and dearest kindred and friends, and the delight in some of all those earthly things that you possesse or can take delight in, and in this one thing alone, God hath done more for you, then he hath done for thousands besides of your rank and quality, in making you acquainted with himself (as I hope you are) and in giving you a longing and earnest desire (as you declare he hath) not onely after the truth of faith, but also after the increase and growth in faith, for he doth not chuse many rich, nor many wise, according to the world, but the fooles, ideots, beggers, and contemptible poor men and women in the esteeme of the world, and those which he hath chosen, and which receive the Gospel, and entertain the glad tidings of life and salvation (in the entertaining of which doctrine is required on our part, Faith first, and then willing and free Obedience) and hold forth the purity of the profession of the truth of Christ, in the face of the very enemies, as no place in the world doth more largely declare, then in this City, in which God is so exceedingly magnified and glorified, by his simple, contemptible, and poor servants, who will not bow heart nor knees to the Dragon, Beast, nor false Prophet, but take more light and pleasure in following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, esteeming it their greatest honour to suffer tribulation for his sake, and to lose their lives (not loving them unto the death) for his glory, as those famous worthies and martyrs in *Queen Elizabeths* time, who for the point of a tall separation from the Antichristian Church Ministry and Worship in England, lost their lives at Tyburne, and else-where, with many others since them, who for the same cause have suffered barbarous tyrannie from the cruell and blood-thirsty Bishops, who then exercised more transcendant and greater cruelty towards them, then ever bloody *Bonner* or *Gardner* (those grand persecutors) did exercise upon the poor *Saints* and Martyrs in *Queen Mariess* time. as you may read in a large petition presented by that worthy servant and Martyr of *Jesus Christ*, *Mr. Robert Row*, recorded in a book called the first part of his plat forme and in this grace of faith is so precious, that the study how to get a great

conditions to spend upon largely and plentifully, even in the midst of all distresses and miseries, as I my selfe (out of experience) to the glory of my good and loving God can speake, for the possessing of this, hath made me never to be so rich, as when I have been the poorest, never to be honoured, as when I have been the most disgraced and reviled, never to be so comfortable, as when I have been the most cast down, never to be so strong, as when I have been the weakest in my self, never to be more merry, then when I have had my greatest calamities, never to be more full of joy, then when I have been in my greatest afflictions, never more furnished with transcendant rejoycing, then when my tribulations have most abounded: For this rare companion which keeps company with none but heavenly with Gods darlings, hath taken me by the hand, and led me to that living fountain of water, that will be alway a well of life, springing up in my soul unto eternall life. Also it hath led me to that spirituall banquet, where I have eate and drunke plentifully of that soule sufficient satisfying manna, so that I shall never hunger nor thirst more: 1 John 4. 10. 14. and 6. 51. 54. in a word, it is that swift post which in the twinkling of an eye, can carry a message up to heaven, and there fasten it upon the Lord of mercy, and never to lett him goe till he hath returned an answer of peace unto it, and grant it the longed for, and desired mercy. It is that armour of proof by which a beleever is able to conquer the world hand to hand, in the boile the devil face to face, to overcome ten thousand enemies, and it is a shield and buckler, a sure rock of defence, so strong that no darts can thoroughly pierce it, no shot fully able to enter it, no storm nor tempest to get will overthrow it, and this also my soul hath found in the enjoying of it, which before I did, it made me many times to wonder at those expressions of the spirit of God in Heb. 11. where many of the mighty wonderfull and marvellous acts of the Saints are recorded.

Now sweet friend, seriously meditate upon these my *extempore* and black lines, in which I have in part expressed the mighty and powerfull works of God, which he hath done for me, and his wonderfull acts manifested by me, and to me, which sets forth the greatnesse of his power, and labour in your own soul that they may become an insight unto you in all necessities, strongly to depend upon God alone, and that it may be as it were a pocket to you, to draw up constant and everlasting comfort out of that spring of consolation, the Lord Iesus Christ, who in my youthfull tender yeares, hath thus above measure filled my soule with the manifold of his fatnes, and the riches of his hid treasure, which is more precious then rubies, and all things else that can be desired, are not to be compared

pared to the riches of it, the fruit of which is better then gold, yea then fine gold, and the revenues of it then much choice silver: *Prov. 3. 14. 15. 16. and 8. 11. 19.* now therefore, cast away your weaknesse, which you complain of, and let not your sicknes trouble you, onely beleieve, and all things are possible, and labour throughly to have your soul convinced of, and settled in the purity of Gods waies, in the upright walking, in which there is abundance of peace and comfort, and withall endeavour now, as it is your duty to become (if already you be not) a Citizen of Gods holy City, and a visible member of his incorporated body, to worship him in Syon, the beauty of holines, the place of his promised presence, according to his laws and ordinances, in a visible Church, for that is the place in which the Lord doth dwell, and which he hath desired to dwell in, where he hath promised to be found, and where the promised increase of grace is to be had, and growth in Godlinesse, for then the Lord is in the midst of it, and is a river of pleasure to make glad this his City, of which glorious things in the Scripture are spoken of. *Psal. 46. 4. 5. and 68. 16. and 84. 7. and 87. 3. 132. 1. 14. to the end, and 133. 3. Jer. 4. 5.* The transcendant glory of this holy Citie, or heavenly *Jerusalem*, or spiritual *Syon*, you shall find it described in *Isa. 60. Rev. 21.* the compleatnesse, state, and matter of which, I have in part many months agoe described, and illustrated in my answer to *W. G.* as there you may read; But now on the contrary side, out of this City or holy place, God is dreadfull and terrible, as the Scripture declareth, *Psal. 68. 35.* therefore if you would be hid from the plague and sheltered in spiritual peaceable security, from the great storm that is shortly like to come and rise on all the world that worshippeth the Beast, in the now pouring out the sixth viall of Gods wrath, *Rev. 16.* then now obey Gods command in separating from all false and antichristian Assemblies, *Rev. 18. 4.* and enter into this his chamber, and shut the door of it upon you, and hide your selfe as it were for a little moment, untill the indignation be over-passed, *Psal. 91. 1.* and so forward, *Isa. 26. 20.* for the Lord is the keeper of this his vineyard night and day, that none should hurt it, and the waterer of this his garden every moment, that so it may be fruitfull. *Isa. 27. 3.*

I could heartily wish that you were acquainted (if you be not already) with some of my loving Brethren, which publiquely protest the same truth for which I suffer, I am but acquainted with very few of them, being never yet in any of their Congregations in *England*, for the day of my publique suffering, was the first time of the manifestation of what the Lord had revealed to me, and though they be but poore, and the con-

contemptible ones of the world, yet my soule hath taken very much delight
 in their society, beyond the rest of my other friends, which though it be
 but a little that I have enjoyed, and that but from a few of them, yet it
 hath been very delightfome to me, because they have given declaration to
 my spirituall eyes and understanding, that their souls are enriched with
 the treasures of God, though the world in regard of its spirituall blind-
 nes, judge otherwise of them, and therefore persecute and hate them, but
 fear you no persecution that may betide you, if you should professe this
 truth of God, for the Lord hath said, he will be with you in an especiall
 manner, if you walk in his waies: therefore never stumble at the losse of
 earthly delights and pleasures (as I hope you will not) for the Lord him-
 self hath said, that they which will not forsake Father and Mother, Hus-
 band and Wife, Brethren and Sisters, and all outward contents and rich-
 es, yea, and their own lives for his sake, are not worthy of him, *Mat. 10.*
 neither let base feare possesse your soule for that of all things else, doth
 the least become a Saint, neither let carnall reason bee predominant in
 your heart, for thats an enemy to all goodnesse, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* and 3.
 but labour in well-doing, in the waies of truth to commit your soule
 unto God and the Lord himselfe, if he call you to it to suffer for his truth
 and sake: I am sure he will fit you for it, therefore regard not your weak-
 nesse and sicknesse, for the Lord will be your strength, if you suffer for his
 cause, yea he will be a God of almighty power unto you, as he hath pro-
 mised, to be, and as I am able to declare out of large and manifold expe-
 rience to his honour I speake it, who in the greatnesse of my
 weakenesse, hath made me strong, and when I scarce had breath
 yet he hath enabled me to give a ready and punctuall answer, with bold-
 nesse, wisdom and courage to the astonishment and admiration of those
 which I have been before, by the commands of the honourable Lords,
 which have made them since to justifie my innocency, and honesty, as I
 have truly heard by them which I have sent to them) one onely instance
 which I will give you at this time: At the beginning of this last term
 upon a delivery of a Petition, to the Lords, by my Brother in my behalf:
 the Wardens of the Fleet sent for me, at which time I was lately againe
 put in Irons, and very weake, having a staffe in the one hand, and was
 led by my Brother, by the other, up to their chambers, in all my close
 furred and sicke robes, and when I came downe into the aire, I was as
 if I were of another world: my strength failing me, and when I came there
 my breath in a manner was gone: yet the Lord according to his promise
 gave me a present strength, and mouth unto me, and after some discourse in
 few words, having acquainted them with the unheard of cruelty, and

barbarous tyranny, which innocently for a long time together hath been exercised upon me, and let them understand of my exceeding sickly condition and those greates paines miseries, and distresses, with the desertion of my Father and kinted, which doth accompany it, then Warden Ingelism pressed mee to a submission, and I answered him, that the Lord had given me a spirit of submission, and to any thing that hee or any other could desire of me, that with the peace of a good conscience I could submit unto, I would submit unto it: but he sleighted and made light of the peace of good conscience: which I told him was more precious unto me, then all the delights of the world, and rather by mee to be choosen then present liberty and deliverance: but alas Sir, said I, What would you have me submit unto? Or what would you have of me? If I be an offender & have deserved death, I refuse not to die, and if you should bring me tidings, that shortly I should goe to *Tiburne* to be hanged, for saying and doing that which I have said & done, you should bring me the welcomest news that could come to me, for then I know I should immediately goe in a Chariot of triumph to the place of my never ending glory and blessednes, which I exceedingly long for, and earnestly strive to bee possessor of, whereas now alas I am alwaies dying and never dead, full of the extremity of bodily pain, misery and distresse, without all outward hope of remedy or redresse, but yet because I would let you and others know and understand, that the spirit of stubbornesse, and disobedience, is not in mee, but that I am not refractory to the King, nor to his lawes, therefore I offer this before you, let the Bishops my adversaries shew mee wherein I have broken any of my severaignties lawes, and I do promise willingly without any conditions to submit unto any thing they desire of me, or if they say, that I am erroneous in my judgement, and hold any thing against them, that is unbound, I will dispute with them or any other, the strongest and ablest in the Kingdome, that they will appoint, or chuse, and if they be able by the authority of the word of God, to confute mee, and shew me that I hold one error against them, I will be bound publickly in every City of the Kingdome to recant, and what can you desire more of mee, but with this, he went aside, to talke with another man, and then Warden Hopkins said, What are you able to deale with a Bishop? yes sir that I am, or any of their associates, for what is a Bishop more then I? God is not tied to a Bishops rocher, he is a free agent, and receives his grace, power, and fulnes, to whom hee will, when and where hee pleaseth: and you know *Pauls* saying is, where is the wise, where is the disputer, of this world? for not many mighty, nor many noble,

many great ones, nor many wise, are called to the knowledge of the truth: but God hath chosen the ignorant, base, contemptible things of the world, to communicate his secrets unto all, that to all the praise and glory might be his. 1 Cor. 1. and Jesus Christ himselfe gave thanks to his Father, and praised him, that he had hid his counsell from the wise and prudent of the world, and had revealed them unto babes and sucklings according to his good pleasure. *Mat. 11. 25.* For so it seemed good before him, out of whose mouth he hath and will perfect his strength, and manifest his power, *Psalm. 8. 2.* But saith the Warden, what spirit have you that you can doe this? Sir, I boast and brag of, no spirit, only I say, the Lord hath promised to bestow his holy spirit of wisdom, understanding and discerning upon all his people, the which he according to the faithfulness of his promise hath given unto me, being one of his chosen and redeemed ones: Neither doe I sacrifice to my owne net, or attribute any thing to mine owne praise, but give the glory and honour of all unto God, by whose power and strength I have stood and doe continue standing unto this present day. But seeing (saith he) you deny their calling, let me aske you, what calling you have to doe these things of which you doe? This is my calling said I, in *Mat. 10.* I read, that Christ said thus to his Disciples, and in them to all his people; you shall be brought before Kings and Princes for my name sake, and they shall deliver you up unto their Counsells, and scourge you in their Synagogues, but be ye not afraid, neither take you any thought what you shall say; for that shall be given you in that houre what you shall answer, for it is not you that I speakes, but the spirit of your father in you, and I will give you such wisdom, that all your Adversaries shall not be able to gaine-say you. Now Sir said I the Bishops cast me into prison for a thing I was as cleare of as your selfe, or any man in this Chamber, I doe professe the which I declared before the honourable Lords at my being before them at my censure in the Star-Chamber, and they innocently delivered me up to the Rulers of the land, and brought me before the Nobles and lique Peeres of the Kingdome, which made me to claim my interest in this promise and to trust in God for the making of it good to me in my distresse, and his faithfulness I found in communicating his speciall assisting power and wisdom unto me, and by his strength only have I done and said that which I have done, and this is my calling which I have to oppose them, and to defend the truth. But I pray you said he, give me your interpretation of this Scripture, Sir this is my interpretation of it which I have given you already. Then comes in one of the Prelates Priests, with

whom he went aside, and betwixt themselves did conferr, to whose talke I listned, and did heare him acquaint him whom I was, and what I had done and said against the Bishops, and as I thinke, would have had him to have talked with me, at which he looked wishfully on me, and I on him, but as I iudge his heart and spirit was full of feare and cowardlinesse, as all the rest of that Fraternity are, which made him that he durst not enter the combate with me, though then in regard of my great weakenesse, and the losse of the strength of my eye sight, that for many weekes together, I was not able to make use of my Bible, and therefore was altogether unable at that time to have disputed.

That Warden is a fair spoken gentleman, and of more humanity in his place then the other, and as I understand, is an University schollar, in which he hath commenced Master of Art : so Warden Ingram came to me again, and after a little more discourse (he in words wished it were in his power to do mee any kindnes, protesting he would do for me what he durst do, I thanked him) and then I took my leave of them both, who very courteously bid me farewell, but especially the Schollar, who is the upper Warden, but yet the other executes the place : this I have set down to that end and purpose, to give you to understand, that God is able to manifest his strength in your weaknes, and in the greatest of your sicknesse, and if he call you to suffer for his sake, though you in your own eyes be never so unfit, yet he will make you able and ready (by laying answers of wisdom in your mouth) to reply in an instant to the wisest and greatest of your opposers : therefore be not afraid of a suffering condition, but yeeld obedience to Gods command, in putting your duty in practice, to walk uprightly without carnall feare in all his waies, neither stumble at his truth for feare of affliction, but expect and looke for that, *for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution* : it is unavoydable, therefore cast up your account before hand, and the Lord give you the ability to play the wise Marchant-man, *in selling all for the purchasing of the Pearl*, for it is worth it, neither distrust Gods power in protecting and keeping you, in walking in his pure and naked waies, but confidently and firmly to beleieve Gods promise and faithfullnesse, and then you shall see he will work mighty wonders for you a weak woman, as you say : I am got in to that pleasant and delightfom discourse with you, my sweet and much honoured friend, that I can scarce tell how to draw to a conclusion with you, my soul being so full of heavenly matter, though I have not inke to write, making use of my own art and invention, to sett downe these lines unto you, nor yet by reason of my weaknes, am I able perfectly to read them

them, yet could I in a little time make them so large, that 20. sheets of paper would not hold them, (filled full of variety of soul experienced and comfortable matter) but my strength will not suffer me to proceed, I having already gone much beyond it, being exceedingly pressed in my spirit, to expresse a little of the greatnes of my affection and love unto you, writing these few lines as an answer to your wellcome and acceptable letter, manifesting my heavenly joy and sweete imprisoned consolation, which you desire to hear of, though I be not able to do the like to others my dear and loving friends, whom I know expect in this manner to hear from me, and I am afraid may take offence that I do not to them, as I have done to you, but I am not able for all the riches in the world to do in regard of my bodily weaknes, onely I verily thinke, the Lord hath given me this present strength for that end, to dish up to your selfe, more than unto others, the dainties that my soule banquets of: therefore acknowledging and returning my humble thanks unto you for your large loving kindnes already expressed towards me in this my sore afflicted condition; but especially have I been ingaged to compile this my epistle to you, for those excellencies sake which I judge God hath bestowed upon you (which you give a large declaration of in your letter) above thousands of your rank and condition: So remembring my entyrest love and ingaged respects unto your self, though unknown to me what you are, but by sight, and a few speeches long since had before my keeper, and as unknown to me where you dwell or abide, I commit and commend as my own soul, to the powerfull protection and safe keeping of Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, and our God all-sufficient, desiring for you, that his naked self, may become a God of fulnes, satisfaction, content and light unto you, and a God of that abstract of sweetnes, which may take up your study, and the love of your soule, and fill it full of heavenly light in the enjoying of himself alone, desiring of you, if so you please, the Lord offer a fit opportunity to heare again in writing from you, to partake of some more of your spirituall melodious mirth and rejoicing, this which I have already seene and received, being become so comfortable unto me, and so for the present I conclude and rest.

In the Fleet, the place of the sweetest spirituall delights, soul refreshings, inward gloryings, hearty consolations, and heavenly comforts, that ever my inward man was possessor of, or I thinke ever shall so long as I am in this earthly tabernacle, and house of clay, this 11.

Moneth called November,

Anno MDCXXXVIIIJ.

Francis Sue 22.

Your assured loving friend, for that beauries sake that I perceive to shine in your soule in close bonds and irons, for my public bearing witness to the pure truth of God, and cause of Jesus Christ.